



AM I ADDICTED TO DRUG USE?

What is substance or drug abuse?

Substance abuse is the extreme consumption of drugs in a way that may cause harm to your self and to the people around you because of your physical and psychological dependence on the drug. Some of the commonly abused drugs are:

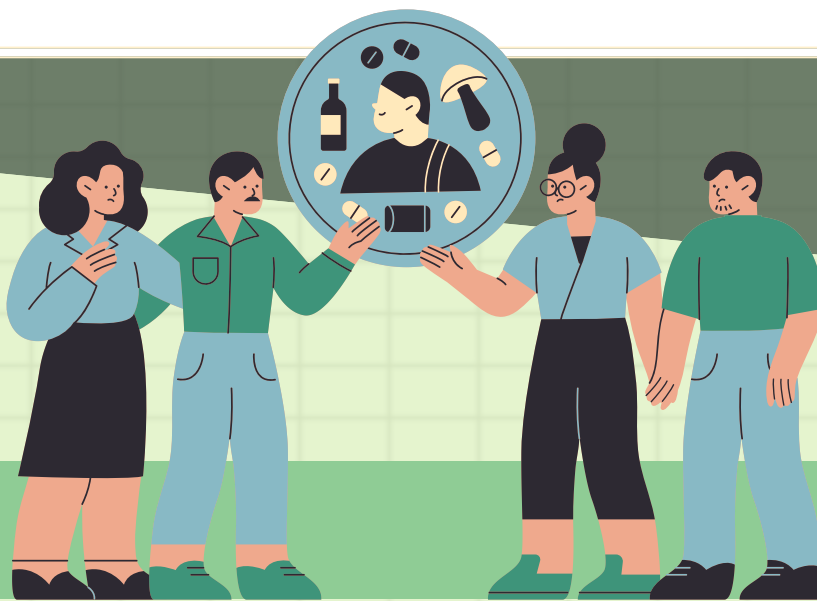
- Alcohol
- Nicotine in the form of tobacco, cigarettes or vaping
- Cannabis products such as weed/ ganja
- Pharmaceutical medication
- Meth/ cocaine
- Non traditional substances such as inhalers



How do I know if I struggle with drug addiction?

Signs of drug addiction include severe symptoms that have a negative impact on your mental health. You may be struggling with drug addiction if you face issues controlling your usage or if the frequency and duration for which you use the drug increases.

Additionally, you may find it difficult to resist the urge to take drugs. Further signs include continued use even when facing negative consequences such as health, social, or financial issues which may indicate prioritizing drug use over your well-being. When addicted, you may face withdrawal symptoms such as nervousness, nausea, unrest, and physical discomfort while attempting to recover or slow down drug use.



What are the risk factors for developing an addiction to drugs?

There are a variety of risk factors that can lead you to develop a drug addiction which include:

- Genetic history of drug use and dependency
- Lack of access to proper housing and education
- Issues coping with hardships
- Influence of peers/peer pressure to initially take drugs and continue to use them.
- Existing mental health disorders that may inspire you to medicate or alleviate your symptoms.
- Exposure to drugs at a young age from family members or peers can contribute to young experimentation due to its accessibility.



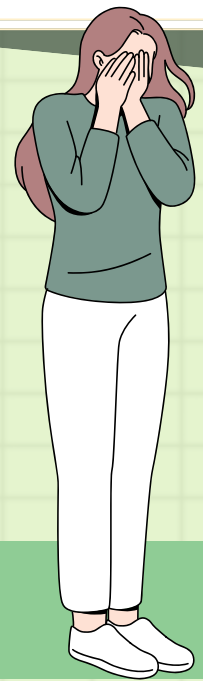
Does drug use impact my mood and behavior?

Frequent use of drugs can impact mood and behavior through swings in mood or desire to make risky behaviors that may be out of place for your character. Mood swings involve feelings of nervousness or irritability after coming down from the substance. You may also face issues with aggressive behavior while under the influence. Additionally, you may want to engage in risks that could lead to detrimental impacts on your overall health such as driving under the influence or using other drugs. Consistent drug use can ultimately change your personality to become more impulsive or act without thought as you actively engage in these dangerous moods and behaviors.



What other consequences can occur because of my drug use?

Social consequences can occur due to drug use as your family and friends may oppose your use of drugs which can lead to strain in your relationships. Additionally, due to the impact on behaviors and moods, you may face difficulties keeping or securing jobs as well as remaining focused on your education.



How can I recover from drug addiction?

The road to recovery is never easy, however, it is not impossible either. The first step is acknowledging that an issue exists and sharing your issues with loved ones to build a support group. This can help you feel not so isolated and offer encouragement throughout the difficult recovery process. Goal setting to refrain from drug use can be helpful when done gradually or over time. However, seeking professional help is one of the most reliable ways to recover due to treatment being focused on both your substance abuse and mental health.



How can I support someone struggling with substance abuse?

Discussing substance abuse with loved ones requires a lot of understanding and patience. First, you must enter the conversation with empathy and a careful approach when expressing concerns about drug use. The next step is to encourage open communication to help them become comfortable expressing their concerns and fears regarding their drug use. Let them know that they are not alone as they may have preexisting feelings of isolation and a general fear of honesty. Share options for treatment such as communicating with other loved ones as well as involving medical professionals that can put them on a better path to treatment. Treatment options can vary from medical health centers, rehabilitation programs, and online programs for support such as Let's Talk.

